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*careta* (big armadillo) or the skin of an alligator in the house. The disease will think that the animals are there and will not go into the house.

### a) *The Treatment of Disease*

I attended a ceremony for the treatment of disease. The ceremony took place in front of some huts, the space was closed in by awnings and cloth. Inside the enclosure were the patient, the medicine-man and a certain number of individuals who assisted the latter. The patient, an old man, was sitting in the center of the space, his body carefully covered with cloth. The medicine-man stood near him and while murmuring incantations blew on the patient's body through his half clenched hand, beginning with his back, then the shoulders, the face and so on. In the meantime four or five men were dancing without interruption and made all the noise they could with a belt of big bells. They had tied to their feet anklets of deer hoofs and wore around their waists belts of ostrich feathers and on their heads were diadems. One of them held in his hand a bunch of ostrich feathers.

Their dance consisted of a cadenced and half-jumping walk with slightly bent knees. Some dancers went forward or backward while others stayed in the same spot. During the ceremony the medicine-man received the help of another old man who was also squatting at the patient's side. He began muttering incantations and blowing on the sick man as hard as he could. After one hour of this utterly exhausting exercise, the medicine-man went to a pot full of rice which was carefully concealed by a sheet near the patient. He crouched under the sheet and recited in a supplicative voice a long incantation over the food. Afterwards he blew on the rice with all his strength. He then offered goodly portions of it to all who had taken part in the ceremony. Then the medicine-man went to two *caraguatá* bags full of dresses. He covered them with a cloth under which he crouched. He

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pronounced the same incantation, blew on the dresses which were unfolded and taken away. On the heap of dresses had been placed a gun wrapped in a red belt richly inlaid with shells. One of the dancers seized the gun and slinging it over his shoulder executed a dance bearing a certain likeness to the one he had done before. The dancers were relatives of the sick man, probably his sons.

### b) *Treatment of Disease*

A rich woman who was seriously ill was cured by five renowned medicine men. A big open space of about fifteen feet square was cleared not far from her house. Wooden posts were erected and a sort of tent set up. One of the posts, about 20 feet high, was decorated with two large pieces of cloth and an old Argentine flag. Around the tent were placed the objects required by the disease, those which are supposed to please him, a mosquito net, a weaving loom, an old suitcase, pieces of gaudily colored cloth, a saddle, a soldier's coat, a lamp, a lance or a gun. A little further away fires were burning where the disease's food was being prepared and a pail of water was being heated for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a pile of hay and old rags. She had put on her best dress and was covered with ritual ornaments. The five shamans, who were old men, were equally adorned with feather belts, rattles, tropical helmets and other precious objects. The lower part of their faces was painted black.

There were also some twenty dancers wearing feathers, red belts adorned with shells, rattles, caps, red pieces of cloth, whistles and old broken watches, while perhaps ten old women ran about holding rags in their hands and one even held an umbrella. Everybody, including the sick person, danced and sang, at times the medicine-men and the sick woman stopped, they blew on her and the dancing was resumed. After a while the chief medicine-man whistled on

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755 ing to the disease while an old woman, who was a magician, sang and blew on the patient. The others were talking among themselves without paying any attention to what was happening. After a pause, during which everybody drank some of the wine required by the disease, a singing man started to run around the patient, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine-man spoke once more with disease while the medicine-woman continued blowing on the patient and another medicine-man placed around the head of the patient front pages of illustrated papers and popular novels. The man who was running stopped and the chief medicine-man started talking with the others. Everybody sat down and drank some water, then two women began to walk rapidly around the others while they sang. One of them stopped and after a short while the other [535] one stopped too. Then all who were present started dancing. The dance was interrupted only by the coughing of the patient who seemed to be growing weaker and weaker. She actually died during the ceremony. Immediately after her [764] death the dance stopped. The old women ran about singing and shaking their rattles. Two men laid the dead woman on her right side and folded her legs and arms. They wrapped her in the pieces of cloth on which she had been lying and she was taken to her home. The medicine-men undressed quietly while the women of the family uttered lamentations.

### c) *General Expulsion of Disease*

755 The ceremony for general expulsion of disease took place
292 early in the morning in the open air, far from all houses. It was performed by all the medicine-men of the village stand-
[534] ing in a row. All were holding in their hands a rattle-gourd and a bone whistle. Some were provided with strips of cloth to which were attached rattles; the strips were worn across the chest or hung at the elbow. Others wore ceremonial shirts, some wore shirts made of *caraguatá* fiber and one

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wore a red knitted shirt of wool decorated with shells. Many wore on their foreheads frontlets trimmed with feathers. Another ceremonial accessory worn by most of them consisted of a bunch ostrich or *potsax* feathers. Two especially famous medicine-men had their faces painted black and red and on the hat of one of them were ostrich feathers. Naturally among the performers were a number of women, some of whom had their cheeks painted red. In front of the performer's row some spears had been stuck into the ground with the points downward. A spear with the point upward was also stuck in the ground at the same distance away as the others. During the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was fixed to the spear with the head pointed up. When I arrived I noticed in front of the row a young man who was not a magician. He was grinding into a calabash the *hatax* seeds from which the medicine-men later took pinches.

The ceremony consisted of a song without words, identical to that sung by the medicine-men when curing diseases. The singing was punctuated by the rattling of the gourds and from time to time by the clacking of hoof and rattle necklaces and the whistling of the flutes. Each blowing of the whistle indicated a new phase in the traditional sequence of events associated with the ceremony (new metamorphosis of the spirit of the medicine-man, its arrival or departure from a given place). The rattle-gourd is sometimes brandished in a theatening manner as though to scare away an invisible being. In turn, without interrupting the ceremony, some of the performers took a snuff of *hatax* powder. Those who had bunches of feathers stretched them forward making the same gesture which has already been described when speaking of the rattles. One of the performers was running in front and behind his colleagues, holding a bunch of feathers in his hand and dusting them off from head to foot. He was assisted by another who was holding bells and rattles which he shook behind his companions. After they had taken a snuff of *hatax* the performers went on singing, shak-

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

## Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air
756 rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medi-
783 cine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were
796 arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone
[534] whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked
[242] over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war
[237] shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand.
[302] The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

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755 2. The medicine men had transformed their "image"
756 (spirit) into isti'n, a bird of prey, in order to go find the illness,
774 but as on this occasion the latter had proved particularly
825 malicious, this first attempt at conciliation had failed, and the men had to transform themselves into mxsa', earth bees.

## Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(January 24, 1933)

755 In a small neighboring village a man was caught by naLi'le. Toward midnight he was dressed in red and white and
[292] seated in the center of the place for ceremonies; he was given two bells. Facing the sick man three sticks were stuck in the ground; one of them about two meters long was entirely covered with a dark cloth; the other two were 75 to 85 cm. long and had pieces of cloth attached to their upper part, which was topped with tufts of ostrich feathers. The two medicine men, dressed only in belts of ostrich feathers and holding iron rattles in their hands, were at the sick man's side. A little farther away were two assistants (probably members of the sick man's family) and three dancers; all were holding rattles.

[533] The medicine men sang and blew on the sick man, who shook his bells, while the dancers and the assistants stamped in
[535] place, /214/ making their rattles sound. The dancers next began to run around the group in the following manner: they went from left to right while turning their backs to the sticks; arriving level with the latter for the second time, they changed direction and continued in this fashion, alternately making two circles in each direction, while the assistants beat time with their feet and sang, making their rattles jingle, and the medicine men continued to sing and blow. The sick man had remained motionless during this time. After about ten circlings, the dancers

/214 cont./

755 a storm lamp, a lance, and a gun. A little farther away fires
554 were prepared for cooking foods destined for the illness and a bucket of water for the dancers. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent on a bale of hay and some old cloths, dressed in her best clothes and covered with ritual ornaments.
[292] The five medicine men were also adorned; they were wearing
[301] feather belts, rattles, colonial helmets, /215/ and other precious
[302] objects; the entire lower part of their faces was daubed with black. There were also about 20 dancers, dressed up in
755 feathers, red belts decorated with shells, rattles, caps, red
554 cloths, whistles, and old broken watches; about 10 old women
535 were running around with pieces of cloth in their hands, and one of them with an umbrella. Everyone, including the sick woman, danced and sang; sometimes the medicine men and the sick woman stopped, and the medicine men blew on her; then the dance was resumed. After some time the chief medicine man blew on his bone flute and the dance stopped outright. The sick woman danced by herself, slowly lifting one foot, then the other, three or four centimeters above the ground, and staying in one place; during this time, two medicine men were shaking their rattles, a man was tapping in his hands, laughing, and another was shaking two flat, tin bottles — in which powder is sold in the interior of Argentina — filled with seeds; this lasted about ten minutes, and then the medicine
755 men joined in the dance, but only for a short time. After a
554 stop two of them approached the sick woman and began to take off her things; during this time a medicine man was shaking his rattles along the woman's body, beginning with the head. Slowly all the ornaments were taken off, the assistants tapped the ground on the spot where they had fallen, then, running, they went to throw them outside; having gathered them together they shook them several times, and then carefully arranged them. The sick woman was seated in the middle of the tent and given something to drink. The ceremony was interrupted and then continued.

Plate VIII

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A. The medicine men sing to the rhythm of the maracas.

B. Threats by the medicine men; a whistle announcing a transformation.

[End Plate 1]

Plate IX

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[415]

A. Dance around a sick woman.

B. Dance around a sick woman.

[End Plate 2]